

Testimony of a Connecticut Resident
In Support of HB 6633, An Act Concerning Stalking
Krystal Rich, SACS Volunteer and Connecticut Resident
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Senator Coleman, Representative Fox, and members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Krystal Rich, and I am a volunteer for the Sexual Assault Crisis Services, a rape crisis center of New Britain and Hartford (one of the centers under CONNSACS) and a Connecticut resident. As a certified crisis counselor, I have had worked with victims of sexual assault, who have often times also been the victims of stalking. As a Connecticut Resident and sexual assault survivor, I too, have been the victim of stalking. In addition, there is an overwhelming amount of research and statistics to prove that stalking is not only a problem on it's own, but a problem that can lead to many other violent crimes. With that said I am in support of HB 6633, *An Act Concerning Stalking*.

HB 6633 would amend Connecticut's existing stalking laws to include behaviors such as: constantly contacting the victim via the internet or cell phone, by making the victim fearful for their loved ones safety, or by tracking someone through GPS. HB 6633 would also enforce harsher punishments for those who take part in any one of the above forms of stalking. Stalking does not look the same way it did years ago. With the rise of technology over the past several years, and people having access to so many different ways to connect with someone, it is a essential that Connecticut's stalking laws include all of the possible ways a person can use the new technology to victimize another person.

Stalking today can be still be the standard, following another person, but it can also include many other behaviors. Recently, I was sexual assaulted by an administrator at Central Connecticut State University, where I received my Bachelors in Psychology. Leading to and after the assault, I was stalked by my offender in several different ways. For two years prior to the assault, he constantly emailed, text messaged, and called me. After the assault he tried to contact me through facebook, email, and text messaging. As if that was not traumatizing enough, my offender also threatened a number of my supports and friends, which made healing from the assault nearly impossible. He threatened not only to sue them but indirectly threatened their jobs. The most traumatizing part was that there was nothing we could do about it. I felt so hopeless, because if was clear to anyone involved in the situation that my offender was still victimizing me by stalking me, but there could be nothing done about that because technically he was not breaking the law. The ramifications from my offender's actions will be everlasting for me, and I can only hope that my situation can at least help show people what not addressing these pressing issues can really do.

According to recent research on stalking, 3.4 million Americans are victims of stalking each year. This number will only continue to increase given the rise in even more innovative technology if we do not do something about it now. Stalking is a crime that is often times linked to other crimes such as sexual assault and many more forms of violence. By not addressing all of the behaviors that people use to stalk, we are just

leaving the door open for more violence. We cannot say that we are working against violence if we are not working against a crime that is directly linked to the many forms of violence. There is too much violence in this world and we need to prevent it and we need to have the appropriate consequences for it when it does occur. I am a survivor of stalking and I hope that the Committee chooses to protect the residents of Connecticut from this horrific crime.

Thank you for your consideration.

Krystal Rich